

Coins

1978 looms large as the year of change

By Roger Boye

THE NEW YEAR could be a significant one for coin collectors, largely because of proposed changes in the nation's coinage system that are being bantered about in Washington. Here's a synopsis of what hobby enthusiasts should watch for in 1978.

- Elimination of the Eisenhower dollar and the Kennedy half-dollar from the United States coinage system. In a few months, a congressional committee is supposed to conduct hearings on this proposal, which has the support of many

Treasury Department administrators and several congressmen.

- Either a change in the size or composition of the cent — or its elimination. For many months, Treasury Department chiefs have fretted about the cent because the cost of producing this tiny coin is approaching the value of the coin itself. However, there is no consensus about what should be done; so discussion may well drag on into 1979 and even 1980.

- Production of a two-cent coin, production of commemorative coins, production of a gold coin. These proposals all have had their advocates

over the years for different reasons. But there is also much disagreement about each; so chances of adoption in 1978 — or even in the next several years — are slim.

- A decision on what to do with the nearly 1 million old silver dollars remaining in government vaults. A congressional committee was to have held hearings last month on a bill to allow the General Services Administration to set the terms and conditions of a sale. But debate on the energy program fouled up the schedule. Hearings are to be rescheduled for sometime within the next two months.